

IT'S ANDY WILLIAMS

WYCOMBE Wanderers have appointed Andy Williams, the former England amateur international goalkeeper and boss at Hitchin for the past three seasons, to be their new manager in succession to John Reardon who was dismissed two weeks ago, writes **MICHAEL KNOX**.

Once it had become clear that former manager Brian Lee was unwilling to stand again for the position, it became clear that Williams, whose younger brother Rob used to play in mid-field for Wycombe, was the most likely contender.

A master at a school near Watford, Mr Williams lives in Hemel Hempstead and so travelling is no problem. But it was for his skill as a coach that he first caught Wycombe's attention a year ago.

Wycombe made tentative enquiries then into his availability as a manager, but these discussions were not followed through. However this time Mr Williams is coming to Loakes Park as one of their youngest ever managers.

Hitchin's manager takes over Blues

At only 32 Mr Williams is one of the bright young bosses in the Isthmian League and the way he brought success to Hitchin with their limited resources, must have been one of the factors that most impressed the Wanderers' committee.

In a sense injury forced him into his early management career. He started his Isthmian playing career at Wealdstone in 1967 but it was not until 1970 when he joined Enfield that he gained international recognition.

During his three year stay at Southbury Road, he played three times for England and sat several more times on the bench. However it was while he was with Enfield that he broke his left arm badly in a goalkeeping accident.

Even though surgery never restored the arm to its former health, he continued to play top grade amateur football with Ilford before

joining Hitchin in the 1975/76 season. He went as a player but within four months was manager as well, after the departure of his namesake Brian Williams.

At the end of that season he gave up playing to concentrate purely on the management side and the following year, Hitchin, excelled in virtually every cup competition they entered.

Under his guidance they reached the second round of the F. A. Cup for the first time in their history. There they gave Third Division side Swindon all sorts of problems before going down 3-1 after extra time in the second replay.

HITCHIN FIFTH

They enjoyed an excellent run in the F.A. Trophy before losing out to Scarborough, while their triumphs came in the Hertfordshire Senior and Charity cups.

time," he added.

He was full of praise for Andy Williams the man who takes over from him at Wycombe. He said, "Andy is a first class bloke and I think he will do a good job. He'll be good for the club and good for the players as he did well with poor resources at Hitchin."

During the season that has just finished, Hitchin did not excel in cup competitions, but instead improved their Premier Division placing to fifth — an admirable feat with the relative lack of resources.

A spokesman for Hitchin was philosophical about Mr Williams' departure. "We're naturally disappointed to lose him but we wish him well in his new job," he said.

Mr Williams realises the task he faces, especially as he replaces a manager who was dismissed when the team finished third. He said on Monday, "It is one of those challenges that wouldn't be offered again. I know I would be expected to provide success for Wycombe."

He is expected to have some help when he takes up his appointment on Saturday from Mr Lee, who I gather, will be taking a more active

role than in the two years since he retired as manager.

UNDER PRESSURE

The appointment of Mr Williams, a fully qualified F.A. coach, makes sense after the departure of two coaches during the season. However he will be under intense pressure to win something big this season, with the resources at his disposal.

A man with a strong personality, he is unlikely to be worried that several of the Blues players are older than he.

With the services of Chesham's Stewart Atkins and defender Steve Hardwick, Wycombe are on the way to building a strong squad which Mr Williams, with Mr Lee's help, will try to take to the top again.

1977 meeting to be finished!

THE first item on the agenda of the annual meeting of Marlow Football Club to take place on Friday night at 8 pm will be to reconvene the annual meeting of 1977!

Last year the annual meeting broke up in disarray as no one present at the meeting was prepared to accept office as chairman or vice-chairman.

Since then the club has been running under the control of Mr Paul Burdell, secretary, Mr Alan Bell, treasurer, and a small committee.

The meeting on Friday, to take place on the ground, will be open to non-members (though they will not be allowed to vote) as well as members in the hope of regenerating interest in the club's administration.

Reardon says 'no' to Ducks

JOHN Reardon has turned down an immediate return into the football world, by declining an invitation to manage Aylesbury United of the Southern League, next season.

Mr Reardon said he refused the offer because he wanted to get away from football. "I am

glad to be out of the game, so I can now enjoy a normal holiday with my family.

"At the moment I don't want to get back into football again. I don't know if I'll still feel the same in a year's



JOHN REARDON
... praised his successor